

EXHIBIT Z

In the Matter Of:

UNITED STATES vs STATE OF GEORGIA

1:16-CV-03088-ELR

SONIA SHAUN OWEN

December 12, 2022



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SONIA SHAUN OWEN
UNITED STATES vs STATE OF GEORGIADecember 12, 2022
30

1 that change took place or if they were separate at one
2 point in time.

3 Q Okay. And I just want to make sure from a
4 visual standpoint that I also have a clear picture of how
5 your division -- like what falls underneath your
6 division. So I'm going to share another document with
7 you.

8 I'd like for the court reporter -- let me make
9 sure this is on the screen. I'd like the court reporter
10 to mark this next document as Plaintiff's -- Plaintiff's
11 Exhibit 697.

12 (Plaintiff's Exhibit 697 was marked for
13 identification.)

14 Q BY MS. HAMILTON: And Ms. Owen, I am now
15 showing you Plaintiff's Exhibit 697. This is an
16 October 9th, 2020 e-mail from Matt Jones with the subject
17 line "Announcements." The "To" line also lists Matt
18 Jones' name. It's not clear if this was sent out like as
19 a blind carbon copy document or not, but the main thing
20 I'm going to have you focus on is the attachment.

21 For the record, the Bates number on this
22 document has -- for the first page is GA01852181. And as
23 I mentioned, there's also an attachment.

24 Ms. Owen, I am going to give you control of the
25 screen in a moment so that you can scroll through just to

SONIA SHAUN OWEN
UNITED STATES vs STATE OF GEORGIA

December 12, 2022
31

1 become familiar with what's on the screen, and then when
2 you are ready, let me know.

3 A Okay.

4 Q And again, the main thing I will be focused on
5 during this discussion is on the attachment, which is
6 page 2.

7 A Okay.

8 Q All right. And I want to make sure you can
9 also see this document clearly.

10 All right. So focusing on the attachment, do
11 you recognize this document?

12 A I do.

13 Q Okay. What is this document?

14 A It's the org chart for the Department of Ed.

15 Q Okay. And I want to note for the record, at
16 the bottom, this particular document has an effective
17 date of October 9th, 2020.

18 Ms. Owen, do you see that?

19 A I --

20 Q It's in the bottom left corner.

21 A There's -- there's no way that -- I can scroll
22 up and down, but I can't -- I can't scroll over.

23 Q There's a bar at the very bottom of the screen.
24 Okay.

25 A I don't -- I don't know if the zoom thing is

SONIA SHAUN OWEN
UNITED STATES vs STATE OF GEORGIA

December 12, 2022

33

1 give you a chance to confirm the date that was in the
2 bottom left corner.

3 A Yeah, I can't -- I can't see it.

4 Q Okay. Let me see if I can adjust it for you.
5 Can you see -- can you see the bottom left corner now
6 where the mouse is?

7 A Let me move. Hold on. No, I -- I can't see it
8 on mine.

9 Q Okay. Let me see if I can move this up. Okay.
10 Can you see it now?

11 A There you go. Now I can see, yes. Yes, I can
12 see it.

13 Q Okay. My apologies that the -- your -- the
14 view that you have is different from -- from what I can
15 see.

16 All right. So just to confirm for the record,
17 given that confusion there, can you please confirm that
18 the date on this document has -- that this document has
19 an effective date of October 9th, 2020?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Okay. And I want to focus our time just
22 looking at the part of the organizational chart for
23 federal programs, and I just want to give you a brief
24 moment to look at this to confirm whether this is --
25 these programs still fall within your division.

SONIA SHAUN OWEN
UNITED STATES vs STATE OF GEORGIA

December 12, 2022
34

1 A So one change on here is that MTSS is now part
2 of the Division of Whole Child.

3 Q Thank you. Are there any other changes?

4 A That's the -- that's the only thing that I see.

5 Q And the Georgia Network for Educational and
6 Therapeutic Support Program, or GNETS, is also listed
7 within your division; is that correct?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And is that referencing the individuals who you
10 mentioned a moment ago who serve as the GNETS program
11 manager and specialist?

12 A Yes.

13 Q I'm going to stop sharing. Okay.

14 All right. I just put a new document on the
15 screen that I would like for the court reporter to mark
16 as Plaintiff's Exhibit 698.

17 (Plaintiff's Exhibit 698 was marked for
18 identification.)

19 Q BY MS. HAMILTON: And Ms. Owen, I am now
20 showing you Plaintiff's Exhibit 698. This is a
21 September 9th, 2016 e-mail from superintendent Richard
22 Woods to DOE -- "DOE Users" and "Other Agency Users" with
23 a subject line, "Revised -- Revised Organizational Chart
24 and Strategic Plan." The Bates number on the first page
25 is GA01764366, and this document has an attachment.

SONIA SHAUN OWEN
UNITED STATES vs STATE OF GEORGIA

December 12, 2022

154

1 Q And there are -- and, well, correct me if I'm
2 wrong, but there are expectations about how the GNETS
3 programs should be operating according to the board
4 rules; is that correct?

5 MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.

6 THE WITNESS: Yes. Yes.

7 Q BY MS. HAMILTON: Okay. So I'm -- I'm really
8 just trying to get your opinion on whether in your
9 capacity as deputy superintendent you were seeing the
10 GNETS programs operating the way that they are supposed
11 to be operating according to the rules.

12 And so, for example, my last question was, are
13 there any things that you observed at the facilities that
14 you thought were particularly -- like done particularly
15 effectively. You don't have an opinion on whether there
16 was anything that was being done effectively?

17 MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.

18 THE WITNESS: Well, okay, so if I could go back
19 to your -- the -- the previous part, when you say,
20 according to the -- the board rule. So, you know, if you
21 look at the scope of what we do at the department, it --
22 you know, we receive the funds. We flow through the
23 funds to the LEA. There's an application process that
24 Vickie looks at that has numerous components to it.
25 There's the budget aspect of it as well.

SONIA SHAUN OWEN
UNITED STATES vs STATE OF GEORGIADecember 12, 2022
155

1 The policies and procedures, that's done, you
2 know, with a cross-functional monitoring and our -- and
3 our RDA team, and -- but as far as the -- the
4 effectiveness, you know, we're just -- we're not -- we
5 don't run these programs. We're not in those classrooms.
6 We don't sit on the IEP meetings. We don't -- you know,
7 we flow through Title -- you know, 5-, 600 million of
8 Title I funds, but we're not in those classrooms to see
9 how it's implemented.

10 We have end-of-the-year data regarding student
11 achievement, but beyond that, it's just -- it's -- you
12 know, it's very difficult to -- to make that
13 determination. There's certain components that GNETS
14 have to fulfill relative to the grant, but beyond that,
15 the -- you know, the day-to-day operations, who they're
16 going to hire, what students are in, you know, their
17 GNETS program, if they're gonna run it as a -- you know,
18 as a school or a site based, every bit of that falls
19 in -- you know, that's -- it's all GNETS, so local
20 control.

21 So it's just very difficult to answer your
22 question.

23 Q BY MS. HAMILTON: Okay. And just to be clear,
24 I wasn't asking who was controlling the programs; I was
25 just asking in your capacity as deputy superintendent